RNA FOR A BETTER LIFE IN THE HEIGHTS

RIVERVIEW Neighborhood Association

October 1991 *232 Ogden Avenue - Jersey City, N.J. 07307 - (201) 798-0493*

RNA IS NOT AFFILIATED WITH ANY POLITICAL PARTY, ORGANIZATION OR ELECTED OFFICIAL

MEETING MINUTES

The well attended, September 13th meeting of RNA was a typical return-from-summer meeting where all members had to catch up with the important local issues that occurred during the previious three months. In addition, we had an unexpected visit from Mayor Gerald McCann.

There was a brief update on two important issues: the stone/marble factory at 210 Ogden Avenue and the renovation of Riverview Park.

The property at 210 Ogden Avenue (previously used as a auto repair/parking garage) has been appropriated as a stone/marble factory since August, 1990. The owners, the Rodriquez brothers, have gained use of this property by interpreting a use variance (granted in 1982) in a way that would allow this industrial enterprise to operate in our R-2 zoned residential neighborhorhood. A group of neighbors, with the support of the majority of the community, filed a complaint in the Hudson County Superior Court challenging the Board of Adjustment's November, 1990 decision to sanction this factory. One concern is that this breaking of our residential zoning could potentially encourage future attempts to allow industrial or commercail ventures on our street. There are also the problems of blocking and trespassing of neighbors' driveways by large trucks making deliveries of stone, the danger of these large trucks illegally backing into Ogden Avenue from Franklin Street and the use of a forklift on the public sidewalk: in essence, turning the front of the property into a loading zone for their business. The Board of Adjustment decided to rehear the case on September 12 and reconsider the validity of this use variance. However because of a crowded docket, the hearing was rescheduled for sometime in the month of October. All interested, should come to the October meeting for further details.

The next topic was about the status of the proposed renovations for Riverview Park. RNA found out in September that the City was going ahead with their plans to upgrade the section of the Park between Palisade and Ogden Avenues. It was also learned that the Jersey City Environmental Commission had voted to accept these plans in June, 1991. Unfortunately, these actions were taken without the knowledge or participation of RNA. The reason RNA is concerned, is that we were in negotiations with the City about certain aspects of the plan that we disagreed with: namely the preservation and safety of the trees and the relocation of the children's playground. Both the directors of Architecture (Bob Cerchio) and Parks (Rodney Hadley) had informed RNA as recently as April of this year that there were no plans to implement the renovations: they were on the back burner, so to speak. In September, Betty Kearns, of the Engineering Department, when asked about the status of the Park renovation was evasive and ambiguous about the plans. (Previously, RNA had asked that Council President Marilyn Roman to intervene in the negotiations. Certain compromises were worked out in regrds to the trees but the issue of the playground was to be worked out later. She promised to survey the local PTA's to gather information about the proposed playground. Although she states that she made some inquiries about this proposal, she neither officially ,or unofficially, contacted RNA with the results.) Although, the City is not legally required to contact a neighborhood association about plans such as these, there seems to be an ethical, if not a moral problem with the way this was handled. When a City agency, such as the Division of Architecture, recognizes Riverview Neighborhood Assoication as a valid representative of the community and negotiates with them regarding the renovations of a local Park for over a year, it seems wrong to stop discussing the matter with the group and unilaterally take action without the minimum courtesy of informing the group that the plan is being implemented. [As we go to press, Sal Riggi, the chairperson of the Environmental Commission contacted RNA and promised to look into this matter.]

Then our surprise guest, Gerry McCann took the floor and answered questions for the last half of the meeting. The Mayor covered such topics as the new 1991 property taxes,

COMING EVENTS

1) **RNA MEETING:**
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11th, at 7:30 PM
AT THE HARBOR VIEW HEALTH CARE CENTER

TOPICS:
HOLIDAY FOOD AND TOY DRIVE
PARTY FOR HARBOR VIEW RESIDENTS

school spending, garbage collections, and street cleanings, recycling and the ever-persistent, ever increasing drug and crime problems.

He outlined some plans to get school children involved in recycling and a campaign aimed at the general public to improve the conditions of our streets and the garbage that is littering them. He also mentioned that Jersey City was working with other local municipalities to clean up some of the drug problems. He stated that he is trying to rehire the 50 laid off police officers. He spoke of the false impression created by the press media that there will be a increase in our local taxes. He assured us that the increase would be under fifty cents a thousand.

Pertaining to our local area , he stated that he would entertain a proposal to reopen Mountain Road and Holland Street if the community so desired.

When the Mayor finished, we adjourned for coffee and cake (Mr. McCann complimented our group for having the best cakes and pastries.) Our members spoke individually to the Mayor and to Captain James Shamberg of the North District. The Police Captain was in the audience for our meeting but was not a speaker. He did however, listen to the complaints of members in the neighborhood.

Please join us at the next meeting on Friday, October 11, 1991 at 7:30 PM at the Harbor View Health care Center. You never know who you might meet there.

Maria Tuzzo
Secretary

P.S. The 50/50 was won by Fred Buzzard who generously donated it back to RNA. Our thanks and applause to Fred.

THE RNA HOLIDAY FOOD AND TOY DRIVES

It is never to early to think of helping the less fortunate. This year our food and toy drives will begin with the October 11th meeting and will end with the December 13th meeting. Everyone is being asked to bring their donations of non-perishable foods and/or toys (either used or new but in good working condition) to these meetings or to please call Maria at 659-2245 for the address to drop off items in between the meetings.These gifts will be given to the Jersey City Salvation Army for distribution during the holidays.

ANNUAL HARBOR VIEW HOLIDAY PARTY

This year RNA will sponsor its annual holiday party for the Harbor View residents on Thursday, December 12, at 2:30 pm.

It is a nice way of thanking the Center's administration and senior residents for allowing RNA to use their facilities during the year. More importantly, it is a way of spending some time and bringing some joy to our neighbors at the Center. It is usually one afternoon of volunteering: entertaining, talking and just being with these wonderful senior citizens. Won't you please help to make this year a success?

Volunteers are also needed to serve the residents refreshments and to bake goodies for restricted as well as normal diets.

Anyone who wishes to help in this effort or who has any ideas to make this occasion more festive, please attend the next RNA meeting on October 11th. You can call 659-2245 after 6 pm for further information.

HARBOR VIEW FLEA MARKET

The Harbor View Health Care Center is having a flea market on Wednesday, October 16th from 9:30 am to 3:30 pm. The event is being held in the solarium on the second floor. They are accepting donations of treasures to be sold at the flea market. Contact Diane DeBurgois for further information at 963-1800.

Don't forget to support your neighbors. It's never too early to do some Christmas shopping at the Harbor View Flea Market.

CONRAD'S CORNER

(This is an excerpt of a letter sent to Mayor McCann concerning the proposed renovations of Riverview Park.)

Various details of these new plans will not really be an improvement to the park when they are carefully examined and could be a detriment to the park trees.

Since all the trees of the park are old and have reached a great height, their root structure is under existing paving. Removing the paving and replacing it with concrete and having a wider curbing will damage most of the trees because they are right on the edge of the curbing.

Our suggestion has been to asphalt the paving and eliminate the curbing if necessary as has been done in Audubon Park. This will save the fragile root structure of the trees. Asphalt paving holds up better than concrete if five ton trucks are driven over it by workers. (All the serious damage to the existing paving and the lawns has been done by our own park workers.)

Since all the walks, except a few are dry immediately after a rainfall, dry wells could soak up the excess water for drainage which would be beneficial for the trees instead of piping it down a sewer. The lush growth of the trees can be due to the abundance of ground water around the roots of the trees now. Piping it down a sewer may really dry out the soil. Doing over the present paving with asphalt would not only be a great savings but we would also be sure of saving all the trees. Using mechanical equipment to dig up all the old paving would surely destroy the root structure of the trees. If it were all dug up by hand it could be done; this, however, will not be the case: mechanical equipment will be used which becomes a reckless operation since working with pick and shovel is a thing of the past. Since the walks of Audubon park are paved with asphalt, why not Riverview Park which was declared a Historic Park in 1978 by the Jersey City Historic District Commission.

At present, the oval shaped plot along Bower Street is a large grass area used by young amateur ball players. It is shaped and when no one is playing becomes a nice green area which is so rare in the City. To move the playground over to this area and fence it in along Bower Street which is a two way, two lane street will mean that parents who bring their children to the playground with their cars cannot watch the children play because the narrow two lane street does not allow for parking of cars. The design of the seating area of the

proposed playground in the center of the oval plot will be used by undesirable people at night. It is designed to be a considerable distance from the street separated by a high fence and is just right for illegal activities at night.

Since all this work is funded by the Federal Government e must insist on using materials which will be the least expensive to maintain and repair, since reinforced concrete is not if heavy trucks run over it. We should revert to asphalt paving which the County and New York city uses for their parks and we have recently used in our own Audubon Park.

With using less expensive material we could save half the cost of doing over the park, the remainder could be used to do over a good portion of the eastern section with its two year old dead tree still standing. Who knows if there will even be enough money to do over the rest of the park again.

We could make it all presentable to the citizens of the Heights with the present budget if we changed the plans, and be able to maintain it at less cost. It's a lot easier to maintain asphalt paving than cracked concrete. Wouldn't it be nice to have fencing around the park pavilion too - at least cut down on the cost of painting out graffiti. As long as there are no funds to maintain the park, let's do the least expensive restoration along the same guide lines of Audubon Park's western section to get the most out of the federal money.

LETTERS

I am writing to comment on two issues that were raised at the last RNA meeting. The first concerns the renovations of Riverview Park. I wholeheartedly agree that maintenance is a primary concern with the park, but I believe it is foolish to let that concern delay improvements. Regardless of the condition it is in, the park is being used by residents of our neighborhood. If we can improve it in some way, let's do it.

In addition, I disagree with the belief that the current playground is sufficient for the neighborhood. I am the mother of a young son and I can tell you, the playground is not sufficient. More and better playground equipment is needed. A safer surface (such as a rubber flooring) beneath the equipment also would be a plus. In a perfect world, grass is the ideal surface in the playground, but unfortunately this neighborhood is not perfect. The grass too easily hides broken glass and dog waste. With a rubber mat beneath the playground, those hazards would be easier to spot and easier for the Parks Department to clean-up.

The second issue concerns complaints about Ogden Avenue residents working on their cars in the street. My advice on this issue is, lighten up! Most of the people in the neighborhood do not have the benefit of a driveway where they can perform routine and small repairs on their cars. That leaves only the street. If their neighbors are going to crack-down on them, where are they to go? Should they have to pay a mechanic to perform simple repairs they are capable of handling?

Let me give you a case in point. My Husband, Frank Scafidi, knows routine car maintenance. Some time ago, he went outside to check a problem with my car. No sooner did he pop-up the hood of the car than a policeman showed up because a neighbor had reported him for working on the car. I do not exaggerate when I tell you he did nothing more than look at the engine before the cop arrived. Is that the neighborly way to handle this situation? No one approached him to ask what he was doing, how long he thought he would be working on the car, or even to inform him that extensive car repair on Jersey City streets is illegal. Instead, the person with the complaint called the cops. Fortunately for us the police officer gave Frank a warning, but no ticket.

Believe me, I do not advocate turning our streets into open-air repair shops. Ongoing and extensive auto repair work should not be allowed. But I am asking everyone to give your neighbor a break! Let him change spark plugs, a tire, oil, air and gas filters. If he is disposing of his waste properly, is not posing a danger in the street, and is doing his work quietly, quickly, and efficiently, what's the big deal?

The police have better things to do than chase-down amateur mechanics engaged in the upkeep of their cars. Let the police do their work, and if you have a problem with one of your neighbors, at least take the time to talk to him about it.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Margaret McCorry

BOY FALLS OFF PALISADE CLIFF

On September 14th, a 16 year old boy fell off the Palisade cliffs while running on the dirt path, known as Mountain Road, approximately behind 224 Ogden Avenue. The boy, whose name is Chris Davis of Marion Gardens, fell at least 100 feet and was originally in critical condition. He was taken to St. Vincent's Hospital in New York City, where he was placed on life support systems because of severe head injuries. He and a friend were supposedly running through a property that opens onto the road and were chased by a dog.

As of October 4th, St. Vincent's Hospital stated that Davis was alive, conscious and off life support systems.

On October 3rd, the Jersey Journal reported that a second person was reported to have fallen off the cliffs. This time at Congress Street and Paterson Plank Road. This area is a known drug area because of evidence of drug parapheralia scattered among the rocks.

[At the location of the first accident, a cyclone fence was discovered erected across the Mountain Road preventing free access through this area. Legally this is a "paper street" owned by Jersey City with the only limitation being vehicular traffic because of a cave-in and narrow widths. For someone to appropriate a portion of the Road and prevent anyone else from using it is clearly in violation of the law. To make matters worse, the four foot fence had razor wire stretched across it at a height of four to six feet high - creating a dangerous hazard for someone unknowingly walking into it and injuring themselves.The City was immediately notified and after a police investigation of the fence, the Incinerator Authority removed the fence and the razor wire.]

FREEHOLDER DEBATE

The Heights Coalition of Neighborhood and Block Associations will sponsor a debate between

candidates for the Fifth Freeholder District on Sunday, October 27th between 2 and 4 pm at the Pershing Field Community Center (on the Summit Avenue side of the Park).

At press time, Marie Murray and Neil Schulman have already accepted. Arnold Bettinger has yet to reply. The debate will be moderated by the Reverend John Allen of the Interfaith Council. It is open to the general public.

Although the RNA neighborhood lies outside the Fifth District, it is important to know the opinions and record of these candidates, since this freeholder will affect all the residents of the Heights community.

WHO OWNS THAT PROBLEM BUILDING ON PALISADE AVENUE?

Last month RNA listed the problem buildings on Palisade Avenue with their owners names and home addresses. These problems range from crime and violence, street gangs, drugs and alcohol abuse, sanitation and health violations, building violations, loud music, and car repairs on the street. In an effort to make the responsible people aware of this dilemma, RNA (with the help of Joe Gallagher, aide of Councilman Waddleton) printed the addresses of the properties where these anti-social activities occur.

On September 19th, RNA was informed by mayoral aide Joe Rosell that the owner of 385 Palisade Avenue had voluntarily surrendered to the municipal court for sanitation violations with fines totaling thousands of dollars. The tenants who live at this property have, for over one year, continuously dumped their garbage and debris on the sidewalk and street. Sanitation Inspector Ray Spellmeyer has written tickets and attempted to get this owner into court. It got to such a state that Rosell, also a police officer, was going to personally serve the owner with a warrant for his arrest. This owner does not live in Jersey City.

FORUM ON HUDSON RIVER WATERFRONT WALKWAY

The Department of Environmental Protection and Energy and the Hudson River Waterfront Conservancy will hold a free one-day forum on the Hudson River Walkway. This forum will be held on October 21, 1991 at the Liberty State Park Interpretive Center from 9:30 am to 4:30 pm. The purpose of the forum is to reassess the future and importance of this 18 mile continuous, public-access walkway stretching from the George Washington Bridge to Bayonne. For more information, call 609-292-5399.

HELP SUPPORT RNA

Don't forget to pay your annual membership dues for 1991. It only costs $3.00 a year to enjoy the benefits of joining Riverview Neighborhood Association. Official membership entitles people living within RNA's boundaries - voting privileges on all matters that are brought before the association at the monthly general meetings (the boundaries are Bowers Street on the north, Palisade Avenue on the west, Ogden Avenue on the east and Cuneo Place on the south) and the monthly mailing of our newsletter.

For people living outside the area, membership dues entitle them to receive the RNA monthly newsletter and attend the monthly meetings as active non-voting participants. In general, monies collected from the dues help defray the cost of mailing our monthly newsletter, pay for refreshments, stamps for correspondence and other important or unexpected expenses incurred in running our Association.

Make your check payable to Riverview Neighborhood Association and mail it to 232 Ogden Avenue, J.C., N.J. 07307. Be sure to include your return address so that your membership card can be sent to you. Better yet, bring it in person to our next meeting, Friday, September 13th at the Harbor View Health Care Center.

IMPORTANT JERSEY CITY TELEPHONE NUMBERS

There is always a need to know which Jersey City agency, department or person to call when there is either a question or a problem to be addressed. RNA is printing a listing of these numbers in the newsletter. Each month, there will be a different agency or individual added to the list.

PROPERTY CONSERVATION:
- a) to report abandoned buildings 547-4825
- b) heat & hot water hotline 547-4821

BUILDING DEPARTMENT: 547-5068

COUNCILMAN DAN WADDLETON 547-6817

COUNCILMAN JOE RAKOWSKI 547-4649

COUNCIL PRESIDENT M. ROMAN 547-5907

HEIGHTS COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL CALENDAR

NOVEMBER 4: Guest speaker: William Gaughan, Hudson City Lions Club
Topic: Charitable Services Available from the Lions Club

DECEMBER 2: Christmas Gathering
Refreshments and special awards

Location: North District Police Stationhouse
282 Central Avenue

NEWSLETTER STAFF

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SEE YOU AT OUR NEXT RNA MEETING ON FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11th, AT 7:30 P.M.

The Center for Health Awareness

Monthly Health Calendar

October 1991

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

October 3	Chronic Lung Disease Program begins *Pre-registration required*
October 7	Freedom from Smoking Program begins *Pre-registration required*
October 8	Coping with Grief Support Group meets Every Tuesday thru November 26 at 5:30 p.m. Home Health Dept., 2 Jefferson Avenue, J.C.
October 9	Hudson County Arthritis Support Group meets 2:30 p.m. / Board Room
October 10	Parent-Youth Diabetes Association meets 7 p.m. / Staff Room Guest speaker + costume party
October 14	Cardiac Support Group meets 5 p.m. / Staff Room "Living with Lifestyle Changes" Guest Speakers: A. Cuyjet, M.D. and Cora Losordo, R.N.
October 15	Basic Life Support (CPR) Course A begins *Pre-registration required*
October 17	Adult Caregivers Support Group meets 2:30 p.m. / Board Room
October 17	Christ Hospital Diabetes Association meets 7 p.m. / Staff Room
October 24	"I Can Cope" Program begins for cancer patients and their family members. *Pre-registration required*
October 24	Lupus Support Group meets 7:30 p.m.
October 28	"Look Good...Feel Better" Program for women with cancer. *Pre-registration required*
October 29	Blood Pressure & Cholesterol Screening *Pre-registration Required*

For additional information, please call: 795 - 8030

The Center for Health Awareness
Christ Hospital, 176 Palisade Avenue, Jersey City, NJ 07306

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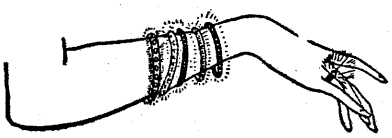

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DON'T FORGET TO BRING A DONATION FOR THE RNA FOOD AND TOY DRIVE TO OUR NEXT MEETING ON OCTOBER 11TH

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LEAF RECYCLING

In addition to our regular recycling day of Wednesday for all paper, plastics, aluminum and glass items, the Incinerator Authority is again organizing a pick-up for leaves this fall.

As in past years, leaves will only be picked up if they are placed in recyclable paper bags. RNA has received brown paper bags, from the Incinerator Authority, for distribution among its membership. They will be given out at our next meeting. (For more information, call the Incinerator Authority at 432-4645.)

The following dates have been designated as leaf pick-up days for our neighborhood:

Thursday, October 24
Thursday, November 7
Thursday, November 21
Thursday, December 5
Thursday, December 19